

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ERDA-05

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PM-04 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ERDE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2885

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

USMISSION NATO

USDOCOSOUTH

CINCUSNAVEUR

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1861

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, GR, TU

SUBJECT: REPORTED TURKISH PLAN TO DRILL FOR OIL NEAR GREEK
ISLAND OF THASSOS

REF: ANKARA 1490

1. WE HAVE READ WITH INTEREST EMBASSY ANKARA'S
RECENT REPORT (REFTEL) OF AN ALLEGED STATEMENT BY
TURKISH MINISTER OF ENERGY AND NATIONAL RESOURCES
KILIC THAT THE GOT WOULD BEGIN SEISMIC SURVEYS IN
THE AEGEAN IN MAY AND THAT TEST BORINGS WOULD OCCUR
LATER NEAR THE ISLAND OF THASSOS AND IN THE MARMARA
SEA. WE SHARE COMPLETELY EMBASSY ANKARA'S BELIEF
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THAT IF THIS STATEMENT WERE TO BE PICKED UP BY THE

GREEK PRESS IT COULD WELL DRAW A SHARP PUBLIC RESPONSE FROM THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. IT IS EVIDENT THAT SUCH AN OCCURENCE WOULD MAKE EVEN MORE COMPLICATED AN ALREADY DIFFICULT SITUATION.

2. AS THE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY ANKARA ARE AWARE, THERE HAS BEEN ACTIVE EXPLORATION OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES CARRIED OUT IN THE THASSOS AREA BY THE OCEANIC CONCESSION EXPLORATION COMPANY FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, GREEK GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE DECLARED ON THE RECORD THAT COMMERCIAL GRADES OF PETROLEUM ARE IN FACT PRESENT IN THE THASSOS FIELDS, THAT THEY CAN BE FEASIBLY EXPLOITED AND THAT PROFITS FLOWING THERE FROM WILL REDOUND GREATLY TO GREEK INTERESTS. GREEK PRESS OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE TO THASSOS OIL DISCOVERIES AND FREQUENT VISITS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE OCEANIC SITE BY GREEK CABINET MEMBERS. MOST RECENTLY, DURING A VISIT TO NORTHERN GREECE LAST NOVEMBER 22-24, PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS HIMSELF VISITED THE OCEANIC DRILL SHIP. SURROUNDING ALL OF THIS ACTIVITY HAS BEEN HEAVY PRESS PLAY HERE OVER THE THASSOS OIL DEPOSITS. WHILE SOME OF THESE JOURNALISTIC REPORTS HAVE PRESENTED EXAGGERATED PRODUCTION ESTIMATES, NEVERTHELESS THE EMBASSY BELIEVES ON THE BASIS OF OFFICIAL STATEMENTS THAT THE FIRST YEAR PRODUCTION IN 1978 COULD RUN BETWEEN 50,000 AND 100,000 BPD. PRODUCTION AT THIS MAGNITUDE WOULD EQUAL BETWEEN ONE-THIRD AND TWO-THIRDS OF CURRENT GREEK POL CONSUMPTION.

3. THE REVISED OCEANIC CONCESSION AGREEMENT FOR THE THASSOS DEPOSITS WAS APPROVED BY THE GOG IN JUNE OF 1975, SUBJECT TO PROOF OF FINANCING BY OCEANIC OF \$250 MILLION, WHICH WAS SECURED IN OCTOBER. THE OCEANIC CONCESSION CONSISTS OF THREE U.S. COMPANIES AND ONE GERMAN COMPANY. THE U.S. COMPANIES' PARTICIPATION IS 87.5 PERCENT OF WHICH THE MAJORITY (68.8 PERCENT) BELONG TO THE OCEANIC EXPLORATION COMPANY OF DENVER.

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4. AGAINST THE ABOVE BACKDROP, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THERE ARE MANY GREEK HOPES, ASPIRATIONS AND ELEMENTS OF PRIDE TIED UP IN THE THASSOS PROJECT--- BOTH FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE GREEK PUBLIC AND GREEK OFFICIALDOM. ALSO, SINCE GREEK PERCEPTIONS HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED THE EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES OF THE THASSOS AREA AS PURELY GREEK IN NATURE, IT WOULD UN-

DOUBTEDLY CREATE A SIGNIFICANT SHOCK TO PUBLIC
OPINION AND IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES SHOULD MINISTER
KILIC'S STATEMENT BE PUBLICIZED HERE. WE HOPE
THAT THE KILIC STATEMENT DOES NOT REFLECT ANY REAL
INTENT ON THE PART OF THE GOT TO FOLLOW THROUGH IN ACTUALITY
THAT WHICH WAS ARTICULATED BY HIM. HIS STATEMENT
HAS NOT REPEAT NOT AS YET BEEN PICKED UP HERE AND
OF COURSE WE HOPE THAT IT IS NOT. ANY FURTHER
INFORMATION THAT EMBASSY ANKARA OR THE DEPARTMENT
CAN PROVIDE ON THIS STATEMENT WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
KUBISCH

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